

1. Welcome

Gary Morris opened the meeting.

2. Minutes

Gary advised that they can now be downloaded from the Website, currently in .doc (word) format.

The action point from the last meeting was discussed and it was advised that the Council have agreed to giving more notice before any works start. The recent event that prompted the original query, when only 48 hours notice was given and some not informed, was an emergency.

The contractors, Conways, have no schedule currently for the corrective work so it could be 3-6 months before it happens. It was repeated that it is Conways responsibility to put the faults right.

In response the floor added that the communication was not clear and was ambiguous.

John (Gesti's) reported that his trade was down by 40% during the emergency works and that he had received no notice of the works happening.

3. Safer Neighbourhood Report

PC Stevens apologized for PC Gill's absence.

Since the last meeting several incidents were reported including 13 cases of shop-lifting and 1 of criminal damage. 6 arrests and several fixed penalty notices were issued. Overall a drop was reported on the previous 2 months.

Annette asked all to be vigilant as several cases of theft from shops of staff property have been reported. They are aware of at least 1 female with a child of under the age of 10 going into shops, the child is then going behind counters and taking shop staff personal items, mainly mobile phones. These are cases of burglary rather than the lesser crime of shoplifting, as the items taken are in non-customer areas.

The recommendation was made to lock away and hide personal items.

A description was given of the couple, the woman has blond scruffy hair and the boy is aged about 8 and wears a red jacket. Both have thick Irish accents.

A query was raised about the effectiveness of the Shop-Watch scheme.

Cheryl Curr suggested that it may be possible to get the radio people in to give some training at the next meeting, however it may be too short notice for January.

Action Points

SNT to ask CID for information on deliberate acts of flooding.

The floor reported that drug dealing has become commonplace in the alleys behind the shops; Annette will look at getting more patrols in those areas.

Youths have been causing trouble in the square, they are known to be from the traveller community. The elderly and mobility restricted persons are to be targeted with information leaflets to raise awareness of theft.

Orpington Police Station will close within the next 2 months, the area will have Orpington Town Centre and SNT police only. All will be present in the High St. from 10 – 6 every day during the Christmas period.
PC Gill will be moving into the SN Team.

Gary asked about recent incidents of flooding being deliberately started, OTC police did not have any news and would ask if CID have any news.

4. Bid Update

A hard copy of the prospectus is now available and given to all present, with a plan to ensure a copy is handed to all other businesses.

The vote to accept the manifesto will be in February.

Just over 400 businesses are known to be in the BID catchment area and all efforts will be made to personally visit every business to allow discussion of the BID, the cost and the benefits and an opportunity to give feedback to the BID team.

Frank and Cheryl have so far managed to contact 160 of which 108 have been seen; 37 have given a definite YES vote and 11 have given NO votes.

GM stressed that voting is important, a non-vote is a de-facto YES. GM further repeated previous information that the BID will go through with a 50% YES vote and that they have at least 50% of the rateable value of the voting group.

An example was given that if only 10 of the 400 vote and 5 voting YES have at least 50% of the rateable value total of that 10 then the BID will go through.

Bromley College and the Walnuts Centre have already voted yes.

If the BID goes through then a board will be created to manage it, the current BID team will not necessarily be on that board. Sam Parrett - College Principal, The Manager of the Walnuts and Kentons MD have already agreed to be on the Board.

GM continued with a very brief run through of the rest of the Prospectus.

GM gave an overview of the success of the Hitchin BID, taking over services and reducing costs to the businesses within it.

They have just completed their initial 5 year period and have voted YES to a new period.

A point was raised about the amount Charity Shops would have to pay.

Businesses in the Walnuts Centre will get a 50% discount as they would in effect be paying twice for the services the BID would be looking to provide.

Various concerns were raised on the lack of details, the answer given was that nothing can be finalised until the BID is live.

GM informed that in essence the BID will make the OBF redundant. The OBF has made major improvements in its' 4 year history and the BID will be a continuation but now with 400 businesses and real power to make a difference.

Chandra summarised that the figures used in the prospectus were taken from concerns raised through recent surveys. Through these surveys local businesses gave their priorities and main concerns.

BUT the final decision will be made by the BID Board.

5. Town Centre Manager's Report

Cheryl had nothing of note to report.

6. A.O.B.

Orpington Rotary Club advised that they will have their Santa and Sleigh in town for the Christmas period.

Frank Levett received an award for exemplary service to the OBF and the local business community.

The Meeting concluded at 7.45 and the next meeting was declared for the 9th December.